

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

# Guiding 4-H Journal Keeping

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## Your Role

As a journal leader, you have the opportunity to help young people develop the important life skill of keeping accurate records.

The most important qualities you can bring to your job as the 4-H journal leader are:

- A positive attitude toward record keeping.
- A belief in the value of record keeping to young people.
- The ability to relate to both youth and adults.
- An understanding that leadership can be fulfilling for both adults and youth.

Your leadership is important to the success of the 4-H program. 4-H'ers need relationships with adults who are interested in them and their need to grow and develop. Record keeping can meet this need and provide other benefits such as:

- 4-H'ers learn to communicate in writing.
- 4-H'ers learn to organize thoughts.
- 4-H'ers learn to make short- and long-term plans.
- Provides a record of the growth of 4-H'ers from year to year.

Most importantly, you will have the opportunity through record keeping to leave a 4-H'er with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

## Your Reward

State, district and county journal winners are not the only reward in working with 4-H'ers in record keeping. While this aspect is exciting, it will be even more fulfilling to see the

progress 4-H'ers have made and the life skills they have developed.

In addition, you will grow in knowledge and as a person through helping others.

## Your Responsibilities

**Knowledge of 4-H Journal Process** – Your 4-H club will be looking to you as their “expert” in record keeping. You may have obtained your knowledge of the 4-H journal process through experience or acquired it through study and observation. Contact your county Extension office for publications on 4-H record keeping in Arkansas. If your county has a person in the role of journal coordinator, they will be available to conduct training on a county level for you and other journal leaders.

**Training** – 4-H'ers and their parents often shy away from record keeping because they do not understand what is required. By conducting training meetings for 4-H'ers, parents and project leaders in your club, you will be able to explain record keeping and answer their questions. Training may be conducted in any form you feel will be most helpful. Individual sessions, group meetings or telephone conferences can all be very effective. It will be important to know the level of experience each 4-H'er has in record keeping before planning your training.

**4-H Club Program** – Record keeping is an integral part of the total 4-H program. A planning session with all leadership team members can be productive in making this a reality for your local 4-H program. Spend time with each leader discussing ways they can incorporate record keeping. For example, project leaders have many



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opportunities to encourage 4-H'ers to keep project records as well as give them examples and review their records. Team members will be more willing to stress record keeping if they are familiar with the process themselves. As a team, you may wish to set goals for your group to work toward. These may be short-term goals, such as having two special meetings during the year on records, or long-term goals, such as having every member of the group submit a journal for county judging at the end of two years.

## Training Meeting

Plan carefully your 4-H record keeping training sessions. The impressions received at these sessions may prove to be lasting ones. Before any training is conducted, make a detailed study of the record keeping situation in your club. This can be done by talking to other leadership team members, by reviewing members' journals and by visiting with 4-H'ers and their parents.

Younger members will need special assistance in record keeping. Plan training for this age group that allows them opportunities to see examples and have one-on-one assistance with record keeping. Older 4-H members or teen leaders may be trained to assist younger members.

**Topics** – Possible topics for journal training sessions include:

- 4-H Record Keeping for Leaders
- Setting Up Your 4-H Record Keeping System
- The Arkansas 4-H Journal Report Form
- Community Service and Citizenship Activities and 4-H Journals
- Charting for the Arkansas 4-H Journal Report Form
- Awards and Incentives in 4-H Journals
- Putting Your 4-H Journal Together (workshops)
- Project Photographs or One Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words
- My 4-H Story
- Project Planning and Record Keeping

**Types of Training** – In most clubs, there will be a wide variety of levels of experience in 4-H record keeping. This may mean you will need to offer a variety of training sessions. This could include:

- *Individual Conferences* – Working one-to-one with a 4-H member or leader has the advantage of allowing both you and your trainee the opportunity to ask and answer specific questions. During individual conferences, look for problems 4-H'ers are having with record keeping and offer

specific suggestions and encouragement. Remember to praise strengths and to leave 4-H'ers with a feeling of "I really can."

- *Group meetings* allow you to reach a large number at one session and can save valuable time. The topics for group sessions should have universal appeal. Group meetings allow members to share their experiences with record keeping and can often be conducted as workshops. Topics that would work well as group meetings include:
  - Project Photographs
  - My 4-H Story
  - Putting Your 4-H Journal Together
- *Telephone conferences* are effective as training when used to update members or leaders or to remind about deadlines and due dates. Telephone conferences from time to time indicate to 4-H members your interest in their progress.

## Help for You – The Leader

### 4-H Literature

- Helpful Hints for Preparing Arkansas 4-H Journals (available from the 4-H web site at <http://www.uaex.edu>)
- 4-H Record Keeping Leader Training Outline (available from your local county Extension office)

### Support Persons

**Journal Coordinator** – If your county has a volunteer serving in this position, they will be available to train you in proper 4-H journal procedures.

**Organizational Leader** – If you are a member of a multi-project club, the organizational leader is one of the first people to contact for information and help.

**Project Leader(s)** – Your club may have more than one person in this leadership role. This person(s) guides the 4-H members in setting goals and helps them reach those goals.

**County Extension Office** – The county Extension office will provide information on any changes in 4-H record keeping. In addition, they are available to assist you in preparing yourself for your role as journal leader.

**Teen Leaders** – Teen leaders once trained will be an asset in working with younger 4-H members. Contact your organizational leader for information on how to obtain teens to assist with journal training.

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